

Team Start-Up: One of the first Agile Adoption activities

Session given at Agile 2009 by
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**Telling ain't teaching and
listening ain't learning.**

- Bob Barkley



Beginner's Mind

Or, going from 60 to 0 in 5 seconds flat



In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the expert's there are few.

As an expert, you've already got it figured out, so you don't need to pay attention to what's happening. Pity.

Prerequisites

- ▶ Space
- ▶ Product Owner
- ▶ Scrum Master
- ▶ Team
- ▶ Enough product backlog to get going



Ideal team environment

- ▶ Collocated
- ▶ Writing space – flip charts, white boards, windows
- ▶ Tables for gathering
- ▶ Places for head's down work

...but don't wait for the ideal to get going



Designing the Start-Up

- ▶ Good enough – your typical “formula” for starting up teams
- ▶ Insightful – co-created with insights from key players
- ▶ Targeted – based on your observations of the team members and organization; seeks to cure ills you observed (lack of shared values, muddled roles, etc)



Three parts to a good kickoff

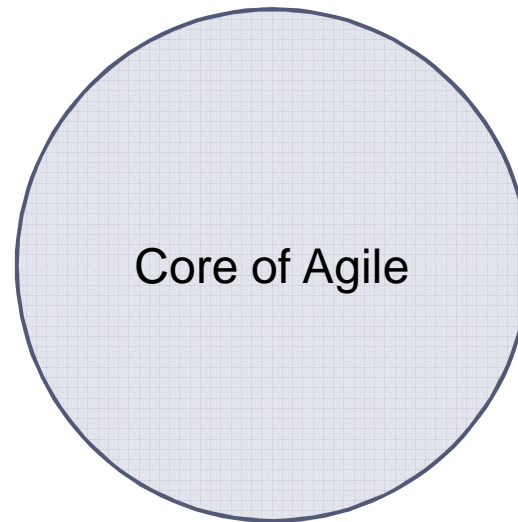
- ▶ Learning about the **Process** (Scrum)
- ▶ Learning about the **Team**
- ▶ Learning about the **Work** ahead



Learning about the Process

- ▶ Scrum 101, or something like that, for team members
- ▶ Exercises that get the team into what it feels like to be self-organized
- ▶ Ideal: managers come talk to the team about their support of the Scrum way of working and let the team know what they will do to play their part
- ▶ Set their minds on high performance

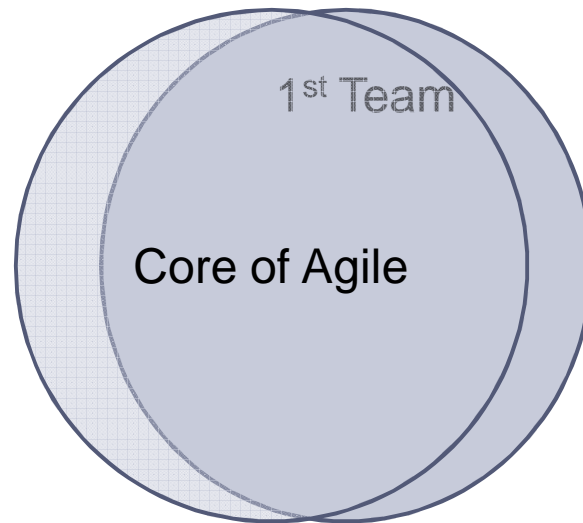
How much Agile101 is needed?



First, there is the core of agile.
This is agile done well and completely.
This is agile at its most powerful and useful.



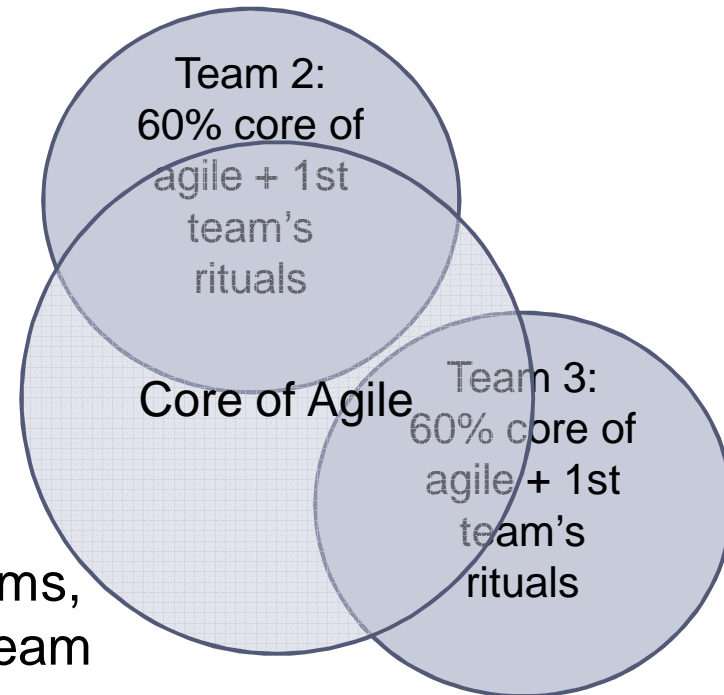
Then comes the first team



Then comes the first team.
They use agile well, and put about
80% of it into full use. They create
their own rituals.



Then the second wave of teams

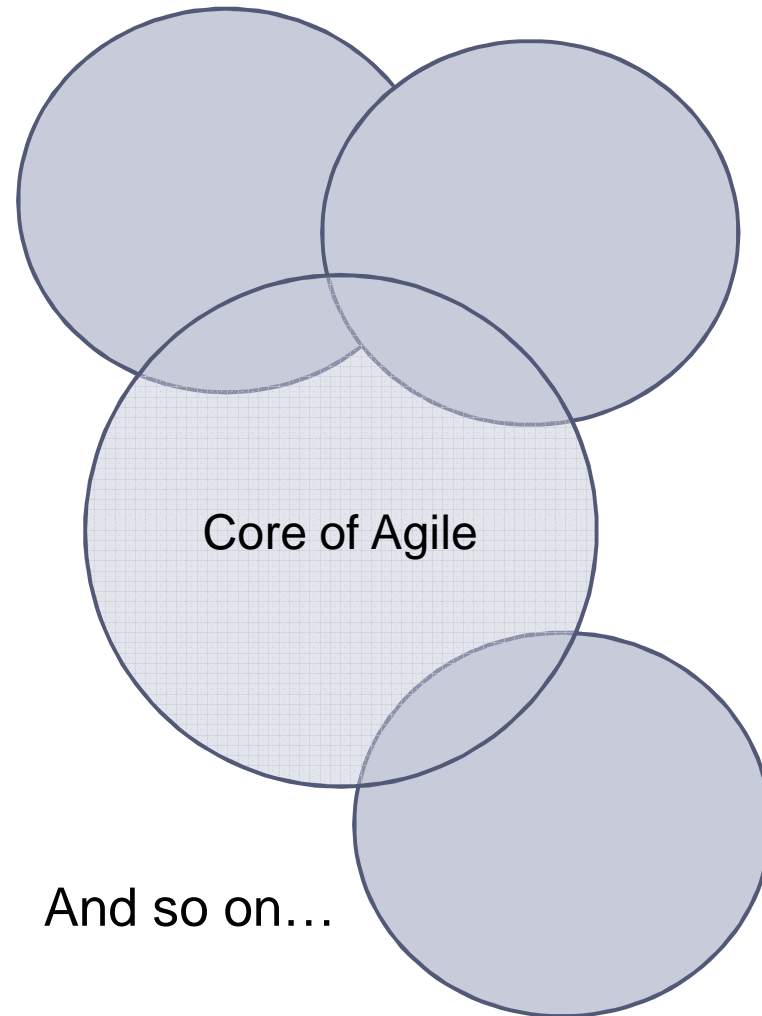


Then comes the second wave of teams, spawned from members of the first team and some newcomers to agile.

They use agile fairly well, and put about 60% of it into full use. They adopt the rituals of the first team and create their own.

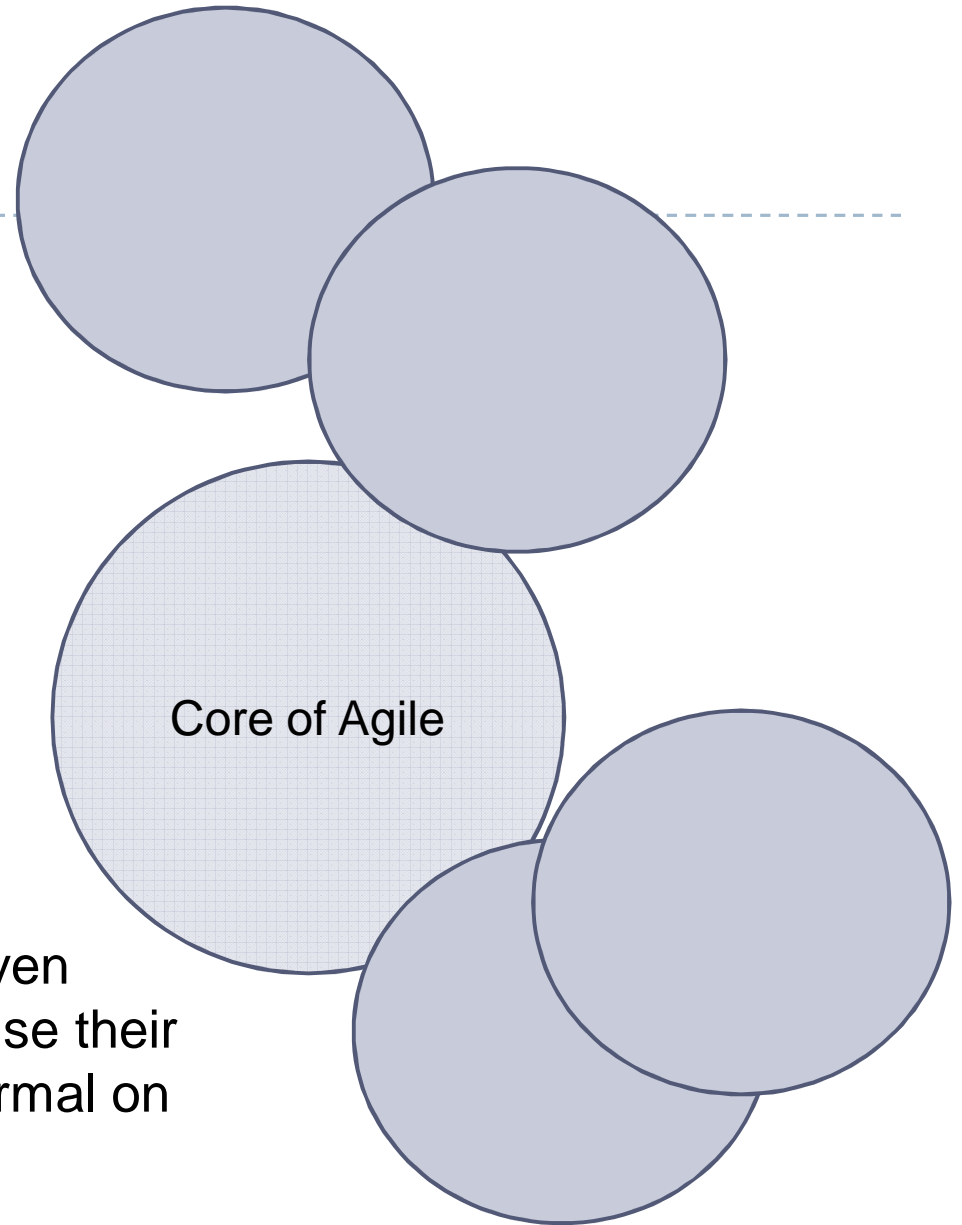


And so on...and so on...



Back to the core

And so on...
Until the job with
experienced agilists
becomes bringing them
back to the core. They don't even
know they have strayed because their
version of agile was simply normal on
the prior team.



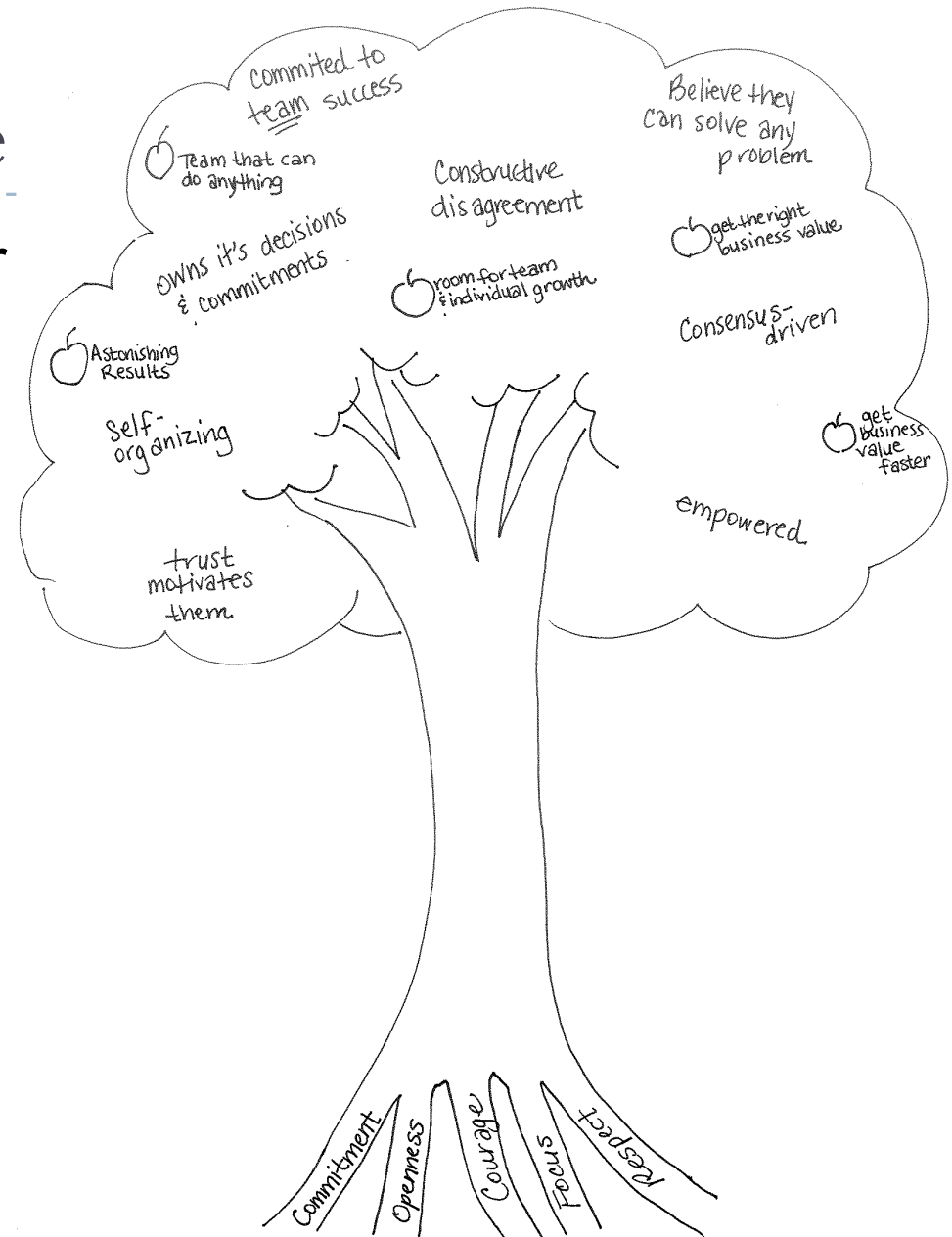
How much Agile 101 is needed?

- ▶ Experienced agilists: re-training in the guise of synchronizing people's various experiences with agile
- ▶ New agilists: Agile 101 + as much as you think is needed to embed the feeling of self-organization. Exercises from your agile training are useful.

There are better times and places for teaching beyond the basics. In the start-up, stick to the basics.

Set their minds on high performance

- ▶ Introduce this metaphor in the start-up
- ▶ Later, each team creates their own journey toward high performance using:
 - ▶ Scrum values as the roots
 - ▶ High performance traits as the leaves
 - ▶ Results as the fruits



Learning about the Team: Individuals First

- ▶ Activities that get the team members relating to one another on a human level and allow them to discover shared values and philosophies. This sets the stage for self-organization and cross-functional working.
 - ▶ Journeylines
 - ▶ Constellation
 - ▶ Values cards

Learning about the Team

- ▶ **Create a shared vision – goals at multiple levels**
 - ▶ Individual goals. What do I personally want from this experience?
 - ▶ Team vision. Who are we as a team?
 - ▶ Project/product goals. What business change does success bring?

- ▶ **Create Team Norms**
 - ▶ Shared values to uphold
 - ▶ Rules for living together
 - ▶ Logistics (sprint length, standup)
 - ▶ Being together in conflict

Learning about the Work ahead: High Level

- ▶ **Statement from the project's sponsor.** Why this project is important to the company, why it's important to me.
- ▶ **Visioning Exercise** to allow team members to imagine the intended results individually (first) and then come together in a shared team vision.
- ▶ **Walk the product backlog (product owner).** Understand the stories and discover gaps. This does not have to be perfect to start.



Wall Street Journal visioning exercise

- ▶ It is one year from now and your product is a raging success. Write the Wall Street Journal article that touts the product and the way your team created it.



Learning about the Work ahead: First Sprint

- ▶ Agree to goals for Sprint 1 (what's the “headline” for the sprint?)
- ▶ Create user stories for the goals.
- ▶
- ▶ Create tasks for the user stories.
- ▶ GO! You have already started Sprint 1!



What one thing will you use from this session
in your next agile team start-up?



By Sept 1st, 2009 look for a blog post on
www.cricketwing.com:

Write up about this session with... activity facilitation
instructions and a sample start-up session design

